Amos
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Amos

Chapter 1

The words of Amos, a sheep breeder from Tekoa, who prophesied concerning Israel in the reigns of Kings Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam son of Joash of Israel, two years before the earthquake. a the earthquake See Zech. 14.5.
He proclaimed:
G OD
 roars from Zion, Shouts aloud from Jerusalem; And the pastures of the shepherds shall languish, And the summit of Carmel shall wither.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Damascus, For four, I will not revoke the decree: b the decree Of punishment. Heb. "it." Because they threshed Gilead With threshing boards of iron.
I will send down fire c send down fire Cf. Lam. 1.13. upon the palace of Hazael, And it shall devour the fortresses of Ben-hadad. d Hazael…Ben-hadad Two of Aram's kings; cf. 2 Kings 13.22–25.
I will break the gate bars of Damascus, And wipe out the inhabitants from the Vale of Aven And the sceptered ruler of Beth-eden; And the people of Aram shall be exiled to Kir —said G OD.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Gaza, For four, I will not revoke the decree: e the decree See note at v. 3. Because they exiled f exiled I.e., cooperated in the annexation of Israelite territory; cf. Jer. 13.19 with note. an entire population, Which they delivered to Edom. g Edom Emendation yields "Aram"; cf. Isa. 9.11.
I will send down fire upon the wall of Gaza, And it shall devour its fortresses;
And I will wipe out the inhabitants of Ashdod And the sceptered ruler of Ashkelon; And I will turn My hand against Ekron, And the Philistines shall perish with no remnant —said the Sovereign G OD.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Tyre, For four, I will not revoke the decree: h the decree See note at v. 3. Because they handed over An entire population to Edom, i Edom Emendation yields "Aram." Ignoring the covenant of brotherhood. j covenant of brotherhood I.e., the alliance between kings of similar social stature. Cf. 1 Kings 5.26; 9.12–13; and see note at 20.32.
I will send down fire upon the wall of Tyre, And it shall devour its fortresses.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Edom, For four, I will not revoke the decree: k the decree See note at v. 3. Because he pursued his brother l his brother I.e., an army of the descendants of Israel; cf. Gen. 25.25–26; 35.10; 36.1. with the sword And repressed all pity, m repressed all pity Or "destroyed his womenfolk"; cf. Judg. 5.30. Change of vocalization yields "destroyed his wombs"; cf. v. 13. Because his anger raged unceasing And his fury stormed n stormed Cf. Akkadian shamaru and Jer. 3.5. unchecked.
I will send down fire upon Teman, And it shall devour the fortresses of Bozrah.

Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of the Ammonites, For four, I will not revoke the decree: o the decree See note at v. 3. Because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead In order to enlarge their own territory.
I will set fire to the wall of Rabbah, And it shall devour its fortresses, Amid shouting on a day of battle, On a day of violent tempest.
Their king and his officers shall go Into exile together —said G OD.

Chapter 2

Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Moab, For four, I will not revoke the decree: a the decree See note at 1.3. Because he burned the bones Of the king of Edom to lime.
I will send down fire upon Moab, And it shall devour the fortresses of Kerioth. And Moab shall die in tumult, Amid shouting and the blare of horns;
I will wipe out the ruler from within her And slay all her officials along with him —said G OD.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Judah, For four, I will not revoke the decree: b the decree See note at 1.3. Because they have spurned the Teaching of G OD And have not observed divine laws; They are beguiled by the delusions After which their ancestors walked.
I will send down fire upon Judah, And it shall devour the fortresses of Jerusalem.
Thus said G OD : For three transgressions of Israel, For four, I will not revoke the decree: c the decree See note at 1.3. Because they have sold for silver Those whose cause was just, And the needy for a pair of sandals.
[Ah,] you who trample the heads of the poor Into the dust of the ground, And make the humble walk a twisted course! d who trample the heads of the poor / Into the dust of the ground, / And make the humble walk a twisted course! Understanding sho'aphim as equivalent to shaphim. Emendation yields: "Who crush on the ground / The heads of the poor, / And push off the road / The humble of the land"; cf. Job 24.4. Father and son go to the same woman, And thereby profane My holy name.
They recline by every altar On garments taken in pledge, And drink in the House of their God Wine bought with fines they imposed.
Yet I Destroyed the Amorite before them, Whose stature was like the cedar's And who was stout as the oak, Destroying his boughs above And his trunk below!
And I Brought you up from the land of Egypt And led you through the wilderness forty years, To possess the land of the Amorite!
And I raised up prophets from among your sons And nazirites from among your young men. Is that not so, O people of Israel? —says G OD.
But you made the nazirites drink wine And ordered the prophets not to prophesy.
e Meaning of verse uncertain; alternatively: "I will slow your movements / As a threshing sledge (cf. Isa. 28.27-28) is slowed / When clogged by cut grain." Ah, I will slow your movements As a wagon is slowed When it is full of cut grain.
Flight shall fail the swift, The strong shall find no strength, And the warrior shall not save his life.
The archer shall not hold his ground, And the fleet-footed shall not escape, Nor the horseman save his life.
Even the most stouthearted warrior Shall run away unarmed f unarmed Lit. "naked." that day —declares G OD.

Chapter 3

Hear this word, O people of Israel, That G OD has spoken concerning you,
Concerning the whole family that I brought up from the land of Egypt:
You alone have I singled out Of all the families of the earth— That is why I will call you to account For all your iniquities.
Can two walk together Without having met?
Does a lion roar in the forest When it has no prey? Does a great beast let out a cry from its den Without having made a capture?
Does a bird drop on the ground—in a trap— With no snare there? Does a trap spring up from the ground Unless it has caught something?
When a ram's horn is sounded in a town, Do the people not take alarm? Can misfortune come to a town If G OD has not caused it?
Indeed, my Sovereign G OD does nothing Without having revealed the purpose To God's servants the prophets.
A lion has roared, Who can but fear? My Sovereign G OD has spoken, Who can but prophesy?
Proclaim in the fortresses of Ashdod a Ashdod Septuagint reads "Assyria." And in the fortresses of the land of Egypt! Say: Gather on the hill b hill Heb. plural; but cf. 4.1; 6.1. of Samaria And witness the great outrages within her And the oppression in her midst.
They are incapable of doing right —declares G OD ; They store up lawlessness and rapine In their fortresses.
Assuredly, Thus said the Sovereign G OD : An enemy, all about the land! He shall strip you of your splendor, And your fortresses shall be plundered.
Thus said G OD : As a shepherd rescues from the lion's jaws Two shank bones or the tip of an ear, c As a shepherd rescues … tip of an ear Cf. Exod. 22.9, 12. So shall the Israelites escape Who dwell in Samaria— With the leg d leg Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of a bed or the head e head Meaning of Heb. uncertain. of a couch.
Hear [this], and warn the House of Jacob —says the Sovereign G OD, the God of Hosts—
That when I punish Israel for its transgressions, I will wreak judgment on the altar f altar Heb. plural, but cf. "altar" in next line. of Bethel, And the horns of the altar shall be cut off And shall fall to the ground.
I will wreck the winter palace Together with the summer palace; The ivory palaces shall be demolished, And the great houses shall be destroyed — declares G OD.

Chapter 4

Hear this word, you cows of Bashan On the hill of Samaria— Who defraud the poor, Who rob the needy; Who say to your a your Heb. "their." husbands, "Bring, and let's carouse!"
My Sovereign G OD swears irrevocably: b irrevocably Lit. "by His holiness." Behold, days are coming upon you When you will be carried off in baskets, And, to the last one, in fish baskets,
And taken out [of the city]— Each one through a breach straight ahead— And flung on the refuse heap c When you will be carried off … on the refuse heap Meaning of Heb. uncertain. —declares G OD.
Come to Bethel and transgress; To Gilgal, and transgress even more: Present your sacrifices the next morning And your tithes on the third day;
And burn a thank offering of leavened bread; d thank offering of leavened bread Cf. Lev. 7.12–14; where, however, the bread is not to be burned. And proclaim freewill offerings loudly. For you love that sort of thing, O Israelites —declares the Sovereign G OD.
I, on My part, have given you Cleanness of teeth in all your towns, And lack of food in all your settlements. Yet you did not turn back to Me — declares G OD.

I therefore withheld the rain from you Three months before harvesttime: I would make it rain on one town And not on another; One field would be rained upon While another on which it did not rain Would wither.
So two or three towns would wander To a single town to drink water, But their thirst would not be slaked. Yet you did not turn back to Me —declares G OD.
I scourged you with blight and mildew; Repeatedly e Repeatedly Meaning of Heb. uncertain. your gardens and vineyards, Your fig trees and olive trees Were devoured by locusts. Yet you did not turn back to Me —declares G OD.
I sent against you pestilence In the manner of Egypt; f pestilence / In the manner of Egypt Alluding to the plagues at the time of the Exodus. I slew your young men with the sword, Together with your captured horses, And I made the stench of your armies Rise in your very nostrils. Yet you did not turn back to Me —declares G OD.
I have wrought destruction among you As when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah; You have become like a brand plucked from burning. Yet you have not turned back to Me —declares G OD.
Assuredly, Because I am doing that to you, g Because I am doing that to you Emendation yields "Because you are acting thus toward Me." Even so will I act toward you, O Israel— Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!
Behold the One who formed the mountains, And created the wind, And whose wishes h wishes Meaning of Heb. uncertain. have been made known to mortals, Who turns blackness i blackness Cf. Joel 2.2. Emendation yields "darkness"; cf. 5.8. into daybreak, And treads upon the high places of the earth, Whose name is G OD —the God of Hosts.

Chapter 5

Hear this word that I intone As a dirge over you, O House of Israel:
Fallen, not to rise again, Is Maiden Israel; Abandoned on her soil With none to lift her up.
For thus said the Sovereign G OD About the House of Israel: The town that marches out a thousand strong Shall have a hundred left, And the one that marches out a hundred strong Shall have but ten left.
Thus said G OD To the House of Israel: Seek Me, and you will live.
Do not seek Bethel, Nor go to Gilgal, Nor cross over a cross over Into Judah; cf. 1 Kings 19.3. to Beer-sheba; For Gilgal shall go into exile, And Bethel shall become a delusion.
Seek G OD, and you will live. Otherwise, [God] will rush like fire upon b will rush like fire Meaning of Heb. uncertain. the House of Joseph And consume Bethel c Bethel Septuagint reads "the House of Israel." with none to quench it.
[Ah,] you who turn justice into wormwood And hurl righteousness to the ground! [Seek G OD,]
Who made the Pleiades and Orion, Who turns deep darkness into dawn And darkens day into night, Who summons the waters of the sea And pours them out upon the earth— Whose name is G OD!
d Meaning of verse uncertain. It is [God] who hurls destruction upon strongholds, So that ruin comes upon fortresses!
They hate the arbiter in the gate, And detest the one whose plea is just.
Assuredly, Because you impose a tax e impose a tax Meaning of Heb. uncertain. on the poor And exact from them a levy of grain, You have built houses of hewn stone, But you shall not live in them; You have planted delightful vineyards, But shall not drink their wine.
For I have noted how many are your crimes, And how countless your sins— You enemies of the righteous, You takers of bribes, You who subvert in the gate The cause of the needy!
Assuredly, At such a time the prudent keep silent, f keep silent Or "moan." For it is an evil time.

Seek good and not evil, That you may live, And that the E TERNAL, the God of Hosts, May truly be with you, As you think.
Hate evil and love good, And establish justice in the gate; Perhaps the E TERNAL, the God of Hosts, Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.
Assuredly, Thus said G OD, The Sovereign—the God of Hosts: In every square there shall be lamenting, In every street cries of "Ah, woe!" And the farm hand shall be Called to mourn, And those skilled in wailing To lament;
For there shall be lamenting In every vineyard, too, When I pass through your midst —said G OD.
Ah, you who wish For the day of G OD! Why should you want The day of G OD? It shall be darkness, not light!
—As if someone were to run from a lion And get attacked by a bear; Or, upon making it indoors, Were to lean their hand on the wall And get bitten by a snake!
Surely the day of G OD shall be Not light, but darkness, Blackest night without a glimmer.
I loathe, I spurn your festivals, I am not appeased by your solemn assemblies.
If you offer Me burnt offerings—or your grain offerings— I will not accept them; I will pay no heed To your gifts of fatlings.
Spare Me the sound of your hymns, And let Me not hear the music of your lutes.
But let justice well up like water, Righteousness like an unfailing stream.
Did you offer sacrifice and oblation to Me Those forty years in the wilderness, O House of Israel?
g This verse and the next would read well after 6.14. And you shall carry off your "king"— Sikkuth and Kiyyun, h Sikkuth and Kiyyun Two Akkadian names applied to Saturn, here deliberately pointed with the vowels of Heb. shiqquṣ, "detestable thing." The images you have made for yourselves Of your astral deity—
As I drive you into exile beyond Damascus —Said G OD, whose name is God of Hosts. i whose name is God of Hosts I.e., who is Sovereign of all the astral bodies.

Chapter 6

Ah, you who are at ease in Zion a Zion Emendation yields "Joseph," cf. v. 6, and 5.6, 15, where "Joseph" denotes the northern kingdom. And confident on the hill of Samaria, You notables of the leading nation On whom the House of Israel pin their hopes: b pin their hopes Taking ba' l- as synonymous with ba' 'ad ; see Isa. 45.24 and second note there.
Cross over to Calneh and see, Go from there to Great Hamath, And go down to Gath of the Philistines: Are [you] better than those kingdoms, Or is their territory larger than yours? c Or is their territory larger than yours? Emendation yields "Or is your territory larger than theirs?"
d Meaning of verse uncertain. Yet you ward off [the thought of] a day of woe And convene a session of lawlessness.
They lie on ivory beds, Lolling on their couches, Feasting on lambs from the flock And on calves from the stalls.
They hum snatches of song To the tune of the lute— They account themselves musicians e They hum snatches … account themselves musicians Meaning of Heb. uncertain. like David.
They drink [straight] from the wine bowls And anoint themselves with the choicest oils— But they are not concerned about the ruin of Joseph.
Assuredly, right soon They shall head the column of exiles; They shall loll no more at festive meals.
The Sovereign G OD wholeheartedly swears: I loathe the Pride of Jacob, f Pride of Jacob A poetic designation of the northern kingdom. And I detest

his fortresses. I will declare forfeit city and inhabitants alike —
declares the E TERNAL, the God of Hosts.
If ten people are left in one house, they shall die.
And if someone's kinsman—who is to burn incense for one of the deceased g who is to burn incense for one of the deceased Or "along with an embalmer." —comes to carry the remains out of the house, h And if someone's kinsman … out of a house Meaning of Heb. uncertain. and he calls to the one at the rear of the house, "Are there any alive besides you?" the answer will be, "No, none." And he will say, "Hush!"—so that no one may utter G OD 's name.
For G OD will command, And the great house shall be smashed to bits, And the little house to splinters.
Can horses gallop on a rock? Can it be plowed with oxen? i Can it be plowed with oxen? Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields "Can one plow the sea with oxen?" Yet you have turned justice into poison weed And the fruit of righteousness to wormwood.
[Ah,] those who are so happy about Lo-dabar, Who exult, "By our might We have captured Karnaim"! j Lo-dabar…Karnaim Two towns east of the Jordan recovered for Israel by Jeroboam II (see 2 Kings 14.25). For Lo-dabar, cf. 2 Sam. 9.4, 5; 17.27; for Karnaim, cf. Gen. 14.5.
But I, O House of Israel, Will raise up a nation against you —declares the E TERNAL, the God of Hosts— Who will harass you from Lebo-hamath To the Wadi Arabah.

Chapter 7

This is what my Sovereign G OD showed me: [A plague of] locusts was created at the time when the late-sown crops were beginning to sprout—the late-sown crops after the king's reaping. a the late-sown crops after the king's reaping Meaning of Heb. uncertain. The king's reaping of fodder apparently occurred near the end of the rainy season, and whatever the locust destroyed after that could not be replaced for another year.
When it had finished devouring the herbage in the land, I said, "O my Sovereign, E TERNAL One, pray forgive. How will Jacob survive? He is so small."
G OD relented concerning this. "It shall not come to pass," said G OD.
This is what my Sovereign G OD showed me: Lo, my Sovereign G OD was summoning to contend by b to contend by Emendation yields "flaming." fire that consumed the Great Deep and was consuming the fields.
I said, "Oh, my Sovereign, E TERNAL One, refrain! How will Jacob survive? He is so small."
G OD relented concerning this. "That shall not come to pass, either," said my Sovereign G OD.
This is what I was shown: [God] was standing on a wall checked with a plumb line c checked with a plumb line Or "destined for the pickax"; meaning of Heb. uncertain. while holding a plumb line. d plumb line Or "pickax"; meaning of Heb. uncertain.
And G OD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," e plumb line See second note at v. 7. I replied. And my Sovereign declared, "I am going to apply a plumb line f plumb line See previous note. to My people Israel; I will pardon them no more.
The shrines of Isaac shall be laid waste, and the sanctuaries of Israel reduced to ruins; and I will turn upon the House of Jeroboam with the sword."
Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent this message to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is conspiring against you within the House of Israel. The country cannot endure the things he is saying.
For Amos has said, 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall be exiled from its soil.'"

Amaziah also said to Amos, “Seer, off with you to the land of Judah! Earn your living g Earn your living Lit. “eat bread.” there, and do your prophesying there.
But don’t ever prophesy again at Bethel; for it is a king’s sanctuary and a royal palace.”
Amos answered Amaziah: “I am not a prophet, h not a prophet By profession. and I am not a prophet’s disciple. I am a cattle breeder i cattle breeder Meaning of Heb. uncertain; emendation yields “sheep breeder”; cf. the next verse and 1.1. and a tender of sycamore figs.
But G OD took me away from following the flock, and G OD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to My people Israel.’
And so, hear the word of G OD. You say I must not prophesy about the House of Israel or preach about the House of Isaac;
but this, I swear, is what G OD said: Your wife shall play the whore j play the whore Emendation yields “be abused”; cf. Lam. 5.11. in the town, your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and your land shall be divided up with a measuring line. And you yourself shall die on impure soil; k impure soil Cf. Hos. 9.3 and note. for Israel shall be exiled from its soil.”

Chapter 8

This is what my Sovereign G OD showed me: There was a basket of figs. a figs Heb. qayiṣ, lit. “summer fruit.”
I was asked, “What do you see, Amos?” “A basket of figs,” I replied. And G OD said to me: “The hour of doom b hour of doom Heb. qeṣ. has come for My people Israel; I will not pardon them again.
And the singing women of the palace shall howl on that day—declares the Sovereign G OD : So many corpses Left lying everywhere! Hush!”
Listen to this, you who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land, c who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land Emendation yields “who on every new moon devour the needy, and on every sabbath the humble of the land”; cf. v. 5.
saying, “If only the new moon were over, so that we could sell grain; the sabbath, so that we could offer wheat for sale, using an ephah that is too small, and a shekel that is too big, d using an ephah that is too small, and a shekel that is too big I.e., giving short measures of grain, but using oversize weights for the silver received in payment. tilting a dishonest scale,
and selling grain refuse as grain! We will buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals.”
G OD swears by e by Or “concerning”; cf. 6.8 with note. the Pride of Jacob: “I will never forget any of their doings.”
Shall not the earth shake for this And all that dwell on it mourn? Shall it not all rise like the Nile And surge and subside like the Nile of Egypt?
And in that day —declares the Sovereign G OD — I will make the sun set at noon, I will darken the earth on a sunny day.
I will turn your festivals into mourning And all your songs into dirges; I will put sackcloth on all loins And tonsures on every head. I will make the earth f the earth Heb. “it”; cf. vv. 8 and 9d. mourn as for an only child, All g All Lit. “the end.” of it as on a bitter day.
A time is coming—declares the Sovereign G OD —when I will send a famine upon the land: not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of G OD.
People shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east to seek the word of G OD, but they shall not find it.
In that day, the beautiful maidens and the young men shall faint with thirst—

Those who swear by the guilt of Samaria, Saying, “As your god lives, Dan,” h As your god lives, Dan See 1 Kings 12.28-29. And “As the way to Beer-sheba lives” i As the way to Beer-sheba lives See 5.5 with note. —
They shall fall to rise no more.

Chapter 9

I observed my Sovereign standing by the altar and saying: Strike the capitals so that the thresholds quake, and make an end of the first of them all. a Strike the capitals … first of them all Meaning of Heb. uncertain. And I will slay the last of them with the sword; not one of them shall escape, and not one of them shall survive.
If they burrow down to Sheol, From there My hand shall take them; And if they ascend to heaven, From there I will bring them down.
If they hide on the top of Carmel, There I will search them out and seize them; And if they conceal themselves from My sight At the bottom of the sea, There I will command The serpent to bite them.
And if they go into captivity Before their enemies, There I will command The sword to slay them. I will fix My eye on them for evil And not for good.
It is the Sovereign G OD of Hosts— At whose touch the earth trembles And all who dwell on it mourn, And all of it swells like the Nile And subsides like the Nile of Egypt;
Who built the chambers in heaven And founded the vault on the earth, Who summons the waters of the sea And pours them over the land— Whose name is G OD.
To Me, O Israelites, you are Just like the Cushites b Cushites People of Cush, the region south of Egypt. —declares G OD. True, I brought Israel up From the land of Egypt, But also the Philistines from Caphtor And the Arameans from Kir.
Behold, my Sovereign G OD is keeping an eye On the sinful kingdom: I will wipe it off The face of the earth! But, I will not wholly wipe out The House of Jacob —declares G OD.
For I will give the order And shake the House of Israel— Through all the nations— As one shakes [sand] in a sieve, c sieve A coarse sieve used for cleansing grain of straw and stones, or sand of pebbles and shells. And not a pebble falls to the ground.
All the sinners of My people Shall perish by the sword, Who boast, “Never shall the evil Overtake us or come near us.”
In that day, I will set up again the fallen booth of David: I will mend its breaches and set up its ruins anew. I will build it firm as in the days of old,
So that they shall possess the rest of Edom And all the nations once attached to My name d So that they shall possess the rest of Edom / And all the nations once attached to My name I.e., the House of David shall reestablish its authority over the nations that were ruled by David. — declares G OD who will bring this to pass.
A time is coming —declares G OD — When the plower shall meet the reaper, e the plower shall meet the reaper Cf. Lev. 26.5. And the treader of grapes The one who holds the [bag of] seed; When the mountains shall drip wine And all the hills shall wave [with grain].
I will restore My people Israel. They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink their wine; They shall till gardens and eat their fruits.
And I will plant them upon their soil, Nevermore to be uprooted From the soil I have given them —said the E TERNAL your God.